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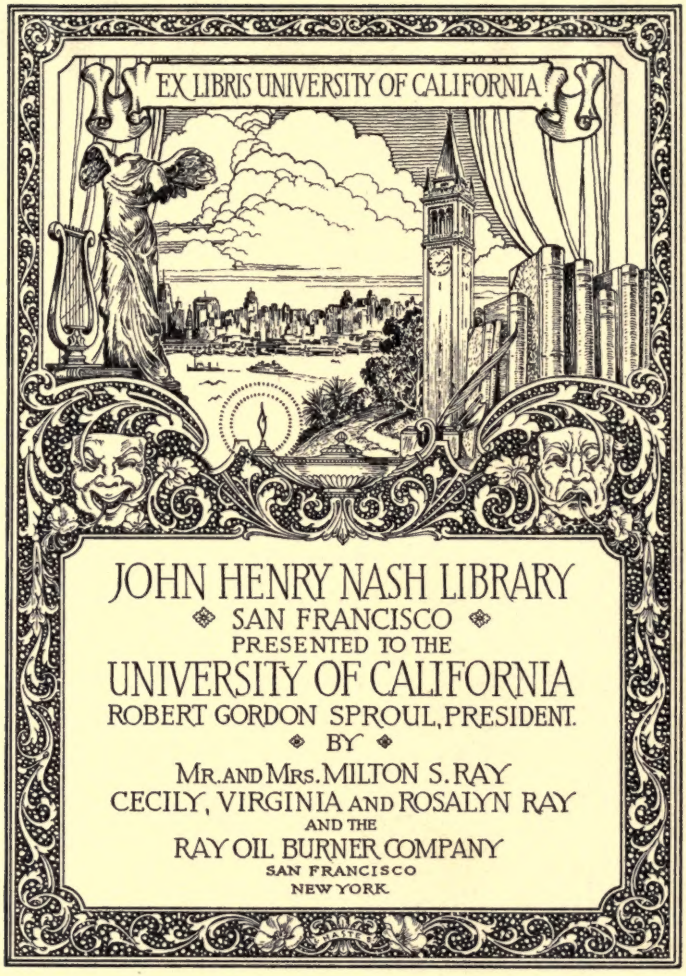
To John Henry Nash.

from

Jack Abbey.

MARCH 1931.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THE CENTAUR.
THE BACCHANTE.

Translated from the French of
Maurice de Guérin by T. S. Moore.

TOUTES CHOSES MIEUX RESSENTIES QUE SENTIES.

Happiness while it lasts embarrasses me, and I even suffer from a certain chill with which I am impressed by it; but once it is over, I have not taken two steps, before a tumult invades me, an infinite regret, an ecstasy of remembrance, recapitulations which exalt the whole past and which are richer than even the hour of happiness; indeed all that makes—what is, it would seem, a law of my nature—everything better felt as recollection than at first hand (toutes choses mieux ressenties que senties).

Fragment from a letter of De Guérin's.

It was given me to be born in the caves of these mountains. As with the river of this valley, whose first drops flow from some rock weeping in a deep recess, the earliest moments of my life fell upon the gloom of a secluded abode, and that without disturbing its silence. When the mothers of our race feel themselves about to be delivered, they keep apart, and near the caverns; then in the most forbidding depths, in the thickest of the darkness, they bear, without a cry, offspring as silent as themselves. Their mighty milk enables us to surmount the early straits of life without languor or doubtful struggle; nevertheless we leave our caverns later than you your cradles. For it is generally received among us, that one should withhold and every way shield existence at the outset, counting those days to be engrossed by the gods. My growing-up ran almost its entire course in that darkness wherein I was born. Our abode

at its innermost lay so far within the thickness of the mountain, that I should not have known on which side there might be an issue, if, turning astray through the entrance, the winds had not sometimes driven in thither freshets of air and sudden commotions. Also, at times, my mother returned, having about her the perfume of valleys, or streaming from waters which she frequented. These home-comings, which she made without ever instructing me about glens or rivers, but followed by their emanations, disquieted my spirit, so that, restlessly, I roamed the darkness. "What are they," I said to myself, "these 'withouts' whither my mother betakes herself, and what is it that reigns there of such power as to call her to itself so frequently? But what can that be, which is experienced there, of nature so contrarious that she returns every day diversely moved?" My mother came home, now animated by a deep-seated joy, then again sad, trailing her limbs, and as it were wounded. The joy which she brought back announced itself from afar in certain features of her walk and was shed abroad in her glances. It was communicated throughout my whole being; but her prostration gained on me even more and drew me much farther along those conjectures into which my spirit would go forth. At such moments I was perturbed on account of my own powers, and used to recognise therein a principle that could not dwell alone; then betaking myself either to whirl my arms about, or to redouble my galloping in the spacious darkness of the cavern, I spurred myself on to dis-

cover, by the blows which I struck in the void and the rush of the pace I made, that toward which my arms were intended to reach out and my feet to carry me.... Since then I have knotted my arms about the bust of centaurs, and the bodies of heroes, and the trunks of oaks; my hands have gained experience of rocks, of waters, of the innumerable plants, and of subtilest impressions from the air; for I lift them up, on blind calm nights, in order that they may take knowledge of any passing breaths and draw from thence signs of augury to determine my path. My feet, behold, O Melampus! how they are worn away! And nevertheless, all numbed as I am in these last remnants of old age, there are days whereon, in broad daylight upon the hilltops, I start off on those racings of my youth in the caverns and to the same end, brandishing my arms and putting forth all that remains of my fleetness.

Those fits of turbulence would alternate with long periods of cessation from all unquiet movement. Straightway, throughout my entire being, I no longer possessed any other sensation save that of growth, and of the gradual progress of life as it mounted within my breast. No more caring to career about, recoiled on an absolute repose, I used to savour in its integrity the boon of the gods working throughout me. Calm and darkness preside over the secret charm of conscious life. Ye glooms, which dwell in caverns of these mountains, to your tendance I owe the underlying education that has so powerfully fostered me, and this, also,

that in your keeping I tasted life wholly pure, such as it flows at first, welling from the gods. When I descended from your fastnesses into the light of day, I staggered and saluted it not. For it laid hold on me with violence, making me drunk as some malignant liquor might have done, suddenly poured through my veins; and I felt that my being, till then so compact and simple, underwent shaking and loss, as though it were bound to disperse upon the winds.

❧ O Melampus, by what design of the gods have you, who desire knowledge of the life led by centaurs, been guided to me, the oldest and saddest of them all? It is now a long while that I have ceased from all active share in their life. I no longer leave the heights of this mountain whereon age has confined me. The point of my arrow serves now only to dig up plants of tenacious root. Tranquil lakes know me still, but the rivers have forgotten me. To you I will impart certain things concerning my youth; but such memories, issuing from a dwindled source, lag like drops of a niggard libation, falling from a damaged urn. I easily pictured for you my earliest years, because they were calm and perfect; simple life, and that only, slaked all craving. Such things are both retained in the mind and recounted without difficulty. If a god were besought to relate his life, it would be done, O Melampus, in two words.

❧ My youth was of wont hurried and full of agitation. I lived for movement and knew no limit to my going. In the pride of my unfettered powers, I wandered about, visiting all parts of

these wildernesses. One day as I was following a valley little frequented by centaurs, I came upon a man making his way along by the river, on its opposite bank. He was the first my eyes had chanced upon; I despised him. "There at most," said I, "is but the half of me! How short his steps are, and how uneasy his gait! His eyes seem to measure space with sadness. Doubtless it is some centaur, degraded by the gods, one whom they have reduced to dragging himself along like that."

Often, after my day, for relaxation I would seek some river bed. One half of me, beneath the surface, was exerted to keep me up, while the other raised itself tranquilly, and I carried my arms idly, out of reach of the waves. Becoming oblivious thus in the midst of the waters, I yielded to the sweep of their course, which would bear me far away, and escort their wild guest past every charm of their banks. How

many times, overtaken by night, have I not followed the stream under the spreading darkness, that let fall, even to the depths of valleys, the nocturnal influence of the gods! Then my headlong life would become tempered till there was left but a faint sense of existence, equably apportioned throughout my whole being; even as throughout the waters in which I was swimming, there was a glimmer infused, shed by that goddess who traverses the night. Melampus, my old age yearns after the rivers; peaceful and monotonous for the most part, they take their appointed way with more calm than centaurs, and with a wisdom more beneficent than that of men. On coming up out of them I was followed by their bounties, which would continue with me for whole days, and take long in dispersing, after the manner of perfumes.

My steps used to be at the disposal of a wild and blind waywardness. In the midst of the most violent racings it would happen that my gallop was suddenly broken off, as though my feet had stopped short of an abyss, or as though a god stood upright before me. Such sudden immobility would allow me to savour my life thrilled through by the rapture of vigour I had reached. In those days, too, I have cut branches in the forest, that, while running, I held above my head; the swiftness of my motion would suspend the restless foliage, which no longer gave forth any but the faintest rustle; but on the least pause, the wind and tumult reentered the bough, which again resumed the volume of its wonted murmur. Thus my life,

on the sudden interruption of the impetuous rush that I could command across these valleys, quivered throughout me. I used to hear it course, all boiling, as it drove on the internal fire which had been kindled by passage through space so ardently traversed. My flanks, exhilarated, opposed the tides by which they were crushed from within, and savoured, during such storms, that luxury, only known else to the shores of the sea, of shutting in, without chance of escape, a life raised to acme pitch and goaded still. Meanwhile, with head inclined to the breeze, which brought me a cool freshness, I contemplated the summits of mountains, distant since a few moments only—I considered too the trees on the banks and the waters in the rivers, these borne on by a lagging flow, those fastened into the bosom of the earth and only so far endowed with movement as their branches are submissive to the breath of air that compels them to sigh. "Mine only," I said, "is free motion; at will, I transport my life from one end of these valleys to the other. I am happier than torrents that descend mountains never to re-ascend. The sound of my going is more beautiful than the sighing of woods, or than the noise of waters, and, with a voice as of thunder, bespeaks the wandering centaur, who is his own guide." Thus while my flanks were still possessed by the intoxication of the race, higher up I indulged its pride and, turning my head, remained so, for some time, in contemplation of my smoking crupper.

Similar to green and leafy forests teased by

winds, Youth heaves to every side with the rich dower of life, and some profound murmur continuously prevails throughout its foliage. Abandoning myself to existence as rivers do, ceaselessly inhaling the effluence of Cybele, were it in the lap of valleys or upon the summit of the mountains, I bounded along everywhither, a mere life, blind and at large. But when the night, replete with the calm of the gods, found me upon the mountain slopes, she constrained me to seek the threshold of some cavern, and soothed me there as she soothes the billows of the sea, permitting survival of such gentle undulations as kept sleep aloof, without however flawing the perfection of repose. Couched on the threshold of my retreat, with flanks hidden in the cavern, and head under the sky, I followed the pageant of the dark hours with my eyes. Then it was that the foreign life which interpenetrated me during the day, detached itself little by little, returning to the peaceful bosom of Cybele, as, after the downpour, fragments of rain, caught in the foliage, fall, they too, and rejoin the runnels. It is said that the gods of the sea, during the night-watches, quit their palaces in the deep, and, seating themselves on promontories, gaze out over the waves. Even so did I keep watch, having at my feet a live-expanse resembling a sea drowsed to torpor. Rendered back to full and clear consciousness, it would seem to me as though I came forth from a womb, and that the deep waters, which had conceived me, were but just returned from depositing me

upon the height of the mountain, even as a dolphin is left stranded on quicksands by the waves of Amphitrite.

❧ My gaze roved freely and pierced to immense distances. Like an ever humid seabeach, the range of mountains in the west retained traces of a glory but ill expunged by the darkness. Out there in the wan clearness, persisted, live yet, peaks naked and pure. There I used to watch coming down, now the god Pan, habitually solitary; now a choir of occult divinities; or else a mountain nymph would pass, intoxicated by the night. Sometimes the eagles of Mount Olympus traversed the highest heaven and melted away among remote constellations, or vanished, dipping under the inspired woods. The potency of the gods, suddenly rousing into activity, troubled the calm of the old oaks.

❧ You pursue wisdom, O Melampus, wis-

dom which is science concerning the will of the gods; and you wander among the nations like a mortal turned from his true path by the destinies. There is hereabouts a stone which, so soon as it is touched, gives forth a sound like to that of the snapping chord of an instrument, and men tell how Apollo, having set down his lyre on this stone, left therein that melodious cry. O Melampus! the wandering gods have rested their lyres upon stones, but none—none has ever forgotten his there. Of old, when I used to keep the night-watches in the caverns, I have sometimes believed that I was about to overhear the dreams of sleeping Cybele, and that the mother of the gods, betrayed by a vision, would let secrets escape her; but I have never made out more than sounds which dissolved in the breath of night, or words inarticulate as the bubbling hum of rivers.

"O Macareus," said to me one day the great Chiron, whom I was accustomed to follow in his old age, "both of us are mountain-bred centaurs, but how diverse are we in our habits! As you see, all the study of my days is given to discovery of plants, but you resemble those mortals who have picked up on the waters or in the woods, and carried to their lips, fragments of some reed-pipe broken by god Pan; thenceforth those mortals, having inhaled from such relics of the god a zest for wild life, or being seized on by some occult frenzy, enter the wilderness, plunge into forests, keep company with running waters, or become involved among the mountains, restless, and carried for-

ward on some unconscious enterprise. Mares, paramours of the wind in farthest Scythia, are not wilder than you, nor more downcast at night-fall, when Aquilo has withdrawn himself. Search you after the gods, O Macareus, inquisitive as to whence are derived men, animals and the elements of universal fire? But the old Ocean, father of all things, keepeth these secrets to himself, and, chanting, the nymphs ring him round in an eternal choir, that they may drown whatever might else escape from his lips parted in slumber. Mortals, who by reason of virtue have touched the gods, have received from their hands lyres wherewith to charm nations, or the seeds of new plants wherewith to enrich them; but from their inexorable lips, nothing.

"In my youth Apollo inclined my heart toward the plants, and taught me how to despoil their veins of cordial juices. Since then I have remained faithful to these mountains, my grand abode, restless, but turning with ever renewed application to the quest for simples, and to making known the virtues that I discover. Do you see yonder the bald crown of Mount Œta? Alcides stripped it in order to construct his pyre. O Macareus! that heroes, children of the gods, should spread out the spoil of lions upon their pyres, and burn themselves to death upon the mountain tops! that the infections of earth should so ravage blood derived from the immortals! And we, centaurs, begotten by an insolent mortal in the womb of a cloud which had the semblance of a goddess, what help

should we look for from Jupiter, whose thunderbolt struck down the father of our race? By the god's decree a vulture eternally tears at the entrails of him who fashioned the first man. O Macareus! men and centaurs alike recognise, in the authors of their race, subtractors from the privileges of immortals, apart from whom, perhaps, all that moves is only a petty theft — mere dust of their essence, borne abroad, like seed that floats in the air, by the almighty current of destiny. It is noised about, that Ægeus, father of Theseus, hid, under the weight of a boulder by the sea-side, remembrances and tokens by which his son might on a future day, recognise his parentage. Somewhere the jealous gods have buried the evidences of universal descent; but by the shore of what sea have they rolled to the stone that covers them, O Macareus?"

Such was the wisdom toward which the great Chiron inclined my heart. Brought down to the extreme verge of old age, that centaur used still to foster in his spirit the loftiest discourse. His bust, vigorous yet, had but little settled back upon his flanks, slightly inclined o'er which, it rose like an oak saddened by the winds; and the firmness of his step had scarcely been shaken in the course of years. One might have said that he still kept some remnants of the immortality received by him in time past from Apollo, but which he had delivered back to the god.

As for me, O Melampus, I decline into old age calmly, as do the setting constellations.

Though I preserve vigour enough to enable me to gain the summit of crags, whereon I belate myself at nightfall, be it to consider the restless and inconstant clouds, be it to watch mounting up from the horizon the rainy Hyades, the Pleiades or the giant Orion; none the less I perceive that I dwindle away and suffer loss rapidly, even as a clot of snow floating on a stream, and that in a little I shall make hence, to be mingled with the rivers that take their way across the vast bosom of the earth.

The End

THE BACCHANT.

There stands the mountain bereaved of the choirs which lately overran its summits. Priestesses and torches with the sacred outcry have streamed back into the valleys, the festival breaks up, the mysteries have returned home to the gods. I am youngest of those bacchants who have been up on Mount Cithaeron. The choirs had not before this carried me away with them to the peaks, for the holy rites held aloof my tender years and enjoined on me to accomplish in full measure the seasons of which an offering should be made before bearing a part at the solemnities. At length the hours, those unseen nurses who yet employ so long a while in rendering us fit for the gods, have placed me among the bacchants and to-day I come forth from the first mysteries that have enveloped me.

Whilst yet I was attaining that age required for the rites, I resembled young fisher-

men who dwell by the sea-side. At the summit of a rock they are seen for a while, both arms stretched toward the waters and body bended downwards, like a sea-god about to dive home; but their souls waver in their mortal bosoms and hold them back. At last they plunge in and some are reported to have returned above the waves, crowned. Thus did I long remain suspended above the mysteries, thus did I at length yield, and my head has reappeared crowned too and streaming.

Bacchus, Spirit of Eternal Youth, God unsearchable and everywhere present, I betimes recognised thy tokens within me and concentrated my best pains that I might devote all to thy divinity. I betook myself one day towards that quarter whence the Sun would rise, at a time when the rays of that god crown the full maturity of fruits and add a final virtue to the labours of the earth. I gained the hills there to offer myself unto his shafts, and to loose my tresses at the first breaking forth of his light above the horizon; for we are taught that locks inundated by the morning lambency become thereby more fruitful and are endowed with beauty which equals them with the hair of Diana. My eyes on setting forth had caught sight of the border edges of darkness which were then once more going down beneath the pole. Certain heavenly signs tardy in completing their descent toward the waves were yet traceable on the almost abandoned sky, and the silence left by night occupied the country side. But even as in Thessaly's fresh vales, the

rivers are wont to put up a breath resembling clouds, which reposes upon them, so the virtue of thy spirit, O Bacchus! had been exhaled from the bosom of the earth, during the dark-watches, and now on the sun's return prevailed over the whole stretch of plain. Constellations, pale at their rising, gain less in glory as they advance on the depths of night than my life waxing great in my bosom gained both of power and of radiance the farther I pushed among the fields. When I stayed my feet upon the hilltops I staggered as does the statue which belongs to the gods in the arms of priests who lift it up on to the sacred pedestal. My bosom, having received into it that effluence of the god which lay spread upon the plain, had conceived therefrom an agitation which hurried my steps and troubled my thoughts till they were as waves maddened by the winds. Doubtless it was favoured by such bewilderment that thou didst precipitate thyself into my bosom, O Bacchus! for it is thus that gods surprise the souls of mortals, even as the sun, jealously bent on penetrating thick and shadowy boughs, will have them parted by Aquilo.

Then there came Aëllo. This bacchant, daughter of Typho, the most turbulent of all the winds, and of a mother vagrant among the Thracian mountains, had been brought up by the nymphs of those regions, in the womb of their caverns and apart from all men; for the gods entrust to rivers who bend their course toward the vastest wilds, or to nymphs who in-

habit the least accessible quarters of forests, the rearing of children sprung from their union with the daughters of the elements or of mortals. Aëllo was on her way down from Scythia where she had betaken herself even to the summits of Mount Riphaeus, and was now going abroad over all Greece, everywhere setting the mysteries in motion and carrying her clamours on to all the mountains. She had attained that age at which the gods, like to shepherds who turn the runnels aside from the meads, shut off those currents which water our mortal youth. Although she still possessed the assurance of a life quite full, its borders, one was forced to acknowledge, began to grow dry, and moreover the usage of the mysteries had blurred the order of her beauty, which presented unmistakeable traces of pallor. Her tresses, numerous as those of night, lay ever spread upon her shoulders, testifying to the vigour and opulence of gifts which she had received from the gods. But whether she had too often shaken them out to the eddying rush of hyperborean gales, or whether within her head she underwent the travail of some secret destiny, already a blighting of those locks was come before the ravages of age hardly set in as yet. Her eyes made clear on the first encounter that they had received for empire the vastest prospects and the profoundest altitudes of sky; they exerted sovereignty at all times and in moving were never hurried; yearning forth by preference towards those shores of space where the sacred shadows are drawn up which receive into their bosom all that disappears over the ho-

rizon. Nevertheless, at intervals, that grand gaze with its immense reach became irresolute, and rolled uneasily much as that of an eagle when its eyes first become conscious of the dark beams of night. She betrayed also some inconstancy as to the ordering of her steps. Now she would wend along river- or forest-side gradually inspiriting her firm light walk, and anon pursued her way with a gait like that of Latona seeking, upon her long adventure, a place of safety wherein she might bring forth the gods which her womb had conceived. Sometimes from the hesitation of her steps which sought to steady themselves and from the constrained and laden air of her head, one had fancied that she was walking at the bottom of an ocean. When her bosom yielding to the persuasion of night grew at one with the universal calm, her voice would well forth in the darkness, peaceful and sustained for hours, like the song of the Hesperides in the uttermost ends of the sea.

Aëllo absorbed me in her friendship and instructed me with all the care that gods expend upon mortals marked out for their favour, and whom they desire themselves to bring up. Like the young Arcadians who go down with the god Pan to the most secret heart of forests in order to learn of him how to place their fingers on sylvan flutes, and also that they may garner into their spirits the sweet plaining of reeds, even so I walked with the great bacchant who every day addressed her steps towards some lonely spot. It was in such desert places that her discourse was revealed and that

I listened to her words taking their flow as it might have been beside the hidden source of a river:

"The nymphs who reign in the forests," she would say, "take delight in arousing, on the borders of woods, perfumes or melodies so sweet that the passer-by breaks from his path and pushes, in order to follow them, as far as the dimmest of these coverts. A subtle influence penetrates the stranger's spirit, the bewilderment which follows thereupon unsteadies his steps, and, while he advances like unto rustic demi-gods who ever bear somewhat of inebriation in their veins, the nymphs vaunt themselves on the might which their dwelling exerts over the spirit of mortals.

But Bacchus causes the intoxicating power which he exhales to be recognised by everything that breathes and even by the steadfast family of gods. The breath of his life for-ever renewed runneth abroad through the whole earth, fostereth to its uttermost ends the eternal intoxication of the Ocean, and, pressing on through the holy air, causeth to tremble the stars who ceaselessly draw their circles about the darkling pole. When, in the depth of night Saturn mutilated the sleeping Uranus, both earth and seas received with the blood shed abroad a new fecundity, of which the earliest fruits to arise were nymphs on the earth and Aphrodite on the waters. Bacchus, constantly detained like a warm vapour within the humid bosom of Cybele, sustains the heat of that aged blood which still engenders whole choirs of nymphs in the

density of forests and in the immortal foam upon the waters.

Rivers have for their home the deep palaces of earth, vast and resounding abodes where those brooding gods preside over the birth and departure of streams. They reign there with ear for ever fed by abundant gurglings and eye riveted upon the destiny of their waters. But neither the depth nor the impenetrability of those vaults is able to cloister these divinities from Bacchus. For access no whither has been forbidden him by the Destinies. The Rivers turn upon their beds and the ancient mud clouds up in the womb of their troubled urns.

Once, throughout the reign of a summer, I took up my abode on the summit of Mount Pangaeus. By intimate promptings, which I recognise anew every year, the approaching joy of the earth and beauty of the country constrain me to take to the mountain slopes. Mortals acceptable to the gods, or those who by reason of excessive woes touched their hearts, have been conducted on high and have taken rank among the celestial signs: Maïa, Cassiopeia, the great Chiron, Cynosura and the sad Hyades have entered on that silent march of the constellations. Guided by the Destinies they climb up into the sky and go down again without pausing or turning aside, and doubtless this perseverance in a course which rises, then falls, and ever again commences where it began, sets up a state of which the blessedness has no necessary bounds, borrowing monotony from roads and sown with some flowers of sleep. I desir-

ed that a slow progress, kept true to the steep outline of the hills, should beget in me a disposition such as the stars draw from their paths, my road bearing me toward the highest of the mountains even as they mount the grades of night. But fruit cannot turn aside its maturity when that approaches; every day, from the earth, there penetrate it yet more urgent gifts of which the consuming heat is signalled on the surface by hues continually heightened. In like manner attacked and overcome from within I was powerless to reject or slacken the life toward which I was prompted. A slow pace, search under forests for refuges sacred to those divinities mute and so powerful by reason of calm, that they have soothed the most acute anguish, long pauses under streams of air setting in from the west after sundown, neither the empty darkness of the night nor yet dreams could arrest for a moment the inward dogging from which my spirit suffered. I went up on the mountains to that level which receives the print of immortal feet; for among the gods some it pleases to follow the high ranges holding their steadfast way along the undulating peaks, whilst others, from crags which dominate afar, consume hours in fathoming the depths of valleys or in considering how shadows and dreams gain entrance within the spirits of mortals. Arrived in these high regions I obtained those bounties of the night, calm and slumber, which subdue restlessness even when it has been caused by the gods. But this repose resembled that of birds, friends of the wind and ever ready to be borne along with

its rush. When, obedient to the coming darkness, they lower their flight toward the forest, their feet lay hold on such branches as, piercing into the sky, are easily heaved by draughts which traverse the night; for even into their sleep they revel in the seizure of the wind and desire that their plumage may shiver and part at the least breath which comes across the top of the woods. Thus, at the very heart of slumber, my spirit remained accessible to the breath of Bacchus. This living breath as it spreadeth abroad abideth by an everlasting proportion and is communicated to everything which rejoiceth in light; but of mortals a few only, privileged by destiny, learn to take knowledge of its passage. It reigneth unto the loftiest summit of Olympus and passeth through the bosoms even of those gods who wear the Ægis and of those who are robed in impenetrable vests. It resoundeth from the brass, that is forever clanging around Cy-

bele, and guideth the lips of the Muses who lift aloft in their songs the whole history concerning the generation of deities in the humid bowels of the earth, in the womb of boundless night, or in the Ocean which has nourished so many immortals.

On rising from sleep, I would resign my course to the guidance of the Hours. They ordered my steps in accordance with the day's progression, and, drawn on by the sun, I went round upon the mountain like a shadow which performs its revolution at the foot of an oak. The feet of some mortals have by the gods been brought to a standstill in the neighbourhood of waters, in the depth of forests, or on a hill-side slope. Sudden roots have drawn their feet into the soil, and all the life that was in them has spread forth in branches and unfolded in leaves. Some among them, rooted to the banks of sleeping water, maintain an holy calm and welcome home on the eve of dawn the swarm of dreams who take shelter among their gloomy boughs. Others, added to the forests of Jupiter or raised aloft on barren hill-crests, hold up aged heads, wild to look upon, which take every wind that blows, and constantly tempt to halt some one of such lonely birds as are observed in the auguries of mortals. Theirs is an irrevocable fate since the divine earth hath hold upon them, and for nourishment they are dependent on her eternal bosom; nevertheless, such as they have become and in their stationary condition, they still retain certain secret movements proper to their former estate. Whether seasons be in decline or

waxing once more, they wait heedfully upon the sun; of all that moves in the universe they no longer discern aught save him, and to him alone it is that they address whatever confused desires they are yet able to form. A few even, such is the strength of their love, order the manner of their growth according to that god's course, directing a greater abundance of their boughs toward those regions through which he passes. In the path on which I would enter in order to follow the day I have found my feet flagging though my forces were still in full vigour, and they would slacken into immobility at last. Then it was I became like unto those mortals who have been straitened within the bark of a tree and brought wholly to a standstill on the mighty bosom of the earth. Rooted in repose, I received the life of the gods as it went by, without a sign of motion and with outstretched arms leant round towards the sun. It was then about that time of day which showers forth the most powerful radiance; everything stood still upon the mountain; the deep bosom of the forest no longer breathed, fecundating flames wrought Cybele to a glow, and Bacchus intoxicated even to the roots of islands far down within the Ocean-bed.

The sun's downward march would determine the direction of my steps along those spurs of the mountain which lay farthest towards the west. The god once vanished and the light he left behind suffering change by an admixture of darkness, the laps of valleys and whole stretches of country again, though slowly, avail-

ed themselves of freedom to breathe. Birds rose above the woods searching in the sky if the going of the winds were re-established; but their wings drunken still with difficulty afforded a reeling flight full of error. A murmur born upon the top of the forest testified that breezes were awakening, yet the summits of the trees responded only by a slight tremour not equal to that which cypress boughs undergo at the hands of Pan when he withdraws from choirs which upon likely nights he animates with his presence; the impetuous measure of the dance having got hold upon his feet causes him to return home reeling into the slumbering woods. Come forth from their deep hidden lairs, beasts of prey arrived upon the heights that they might draw in more vigorous breath; their eyes seemed to be bathed afresh in flame, but their terrible voices had dwindled to a murmur and their undaunted carriage to a slouching languor.

Meanwhile darkness was overflowing from the depth of the valleys; it mounted towards me, apportioning to all things that breathe sleep and dreams; at last it reached and enveloped me, without however finding its way within. I remained compact and alive under the night's heaviness, while the earth, steeped in slumber, communicated repose to my limbs and won them into accord with the prevailing stillness; my brow however wore out the night-watches without being stricken by languor. It was invigorated with all those bounties which the gods had shed abroad during the day, their charm hung round it still, and that new life,

which I had garnered in, poured through it a spirit as of ardent flame.

"Callisto, clothed in the likeness of a bear by the jealousy of Juno, long roamed about the wilds. But Jupiter, who had loved her, brought her forth from the woods to associate her with the stars, and guided her destiny within a peace from which it can never again go astray. She hath a mansion allotted to her in those depths of the night sky which, of old, shed the elements, gods and mortals into the bosom of Cybele. The heavens rank around her their most ancient deeps of darkness and cause her to breathe as much as they yet possess of the principles of life, adding thereto the full glow of that unweariable fire whose emanations animate the universe. Penetrated with an eternal intoxication, Callisto broods over the pole while the entire order of constellations passes by and takes its way down to the Ocean. Thus the night through I remained on the highest of the hills, with my head wreathed about by a kind of ecstasy which weighed upon it like the crown of vine-sprays and bunches of grapes which fosters in the temples of Bacchus an unalterable youth."

In this way would Aëllo instruct me by recounting her fortunes. Once afoot to follow the voice that called it on to knowledge of the gods, my spirit returned no more toward the crowd with whom at first it had made some sojourn; but distanced with its guide toward the least frequented mysteries. Every day the discourse of the great bacchant rose up striking

out before me through the obscurity in which the paths lay. Often will the Muses break from the rapid movement of the choric dance to begin at a slow pace walking through the depth of the night. Cloaked with their thickest veils and bending their steps toward outlying shoulders of the mountains, they pour forth divine songs under the shades of night. The words of Aëllo drew me forwards toward the gods, advancing like such a voice borne on by the Muses through the darkness. Some cavern opening over the plain, summits which take the very latest glow of daylight, beds of the most luxuriant valleys, such were the spots whither Aëllo guided me by preference. The time which she spent with me would stretch often far into the night, and then she withdrew alone, leaving her discourse suspended in my spirit just as nymphs, who having hung their humid garments on a drooping branch, go in once more to the seclusion of their abodes.

None the less the mysteries still drew nigh which were at last to whirl me away with them, but their first stir among the bacchants arrived long before their true rising. Each of us, having recognised within her signs given by the god, began thenceforth to keep apart; for mortals when divinities take hold upon them, wrap their goings in secrecy and are led of new inclinations. We entered every one on a course toward which the trend of our spirits carried us. Like unto the nymphs, daughters of Earth and Sky, who even from their very birth distributed themselves among spring-heads, in diverse

quarters of the forests, and in all places where Cybele had brought together tokens of her fecundity, so our natural leanings dispersed us over all the country regions. We were admitted to a share in the destinies of gods who apply themselves to ruling over the elements. Powerful in their effect upon rivers, woods, fertile valleys, they are gladdened as they ponder upon the life which takes its way under their eyes. But in the course of this studious leisure which they lead bowed over the billowy expanse, their immortal life tends to conformity with its monotonous rise and fall, and their nature goes forth unto the elements they contemplate, even as happens to a man overtaken, on the brink of a river, by sleep and dreams, whose mantle spreads itself out within the stream. Every bacchant allied herself thus to some spot which bore a signal character as birth place of a natural destiny. Aëllo appeared at the summit of hills and rested her head for a long time on the bosom of the Earth; she seemed to be awaiting like Melampus, son of Amithaon, till the serpent, whose markings resemble a poppy, should come and bind itself about her temples. Hippothea, seated near the gushing forth of fountains, was there rendered motionless; her hair, which she had shaken out, her arms in their abandonment, and her gaze fastened on the swift waters, showed clearly her leaning towards their destiny and that her spirit would soon be at one with their flow. Plexaura's path plunged with her into the most extensive forests. When an Ocean-nymph, while crossing the open sea, is over-

taken by sleep, her limbs succumb and take the lie of the waves; she has abandoned the direction of her voyage to the inconstant waters. To see her floating, from a distance, one had thought her the corpse of some mortal, but within the wave that bears her away she is stretched out with the buoyancy of life and her bosom profits by a sleep which the Ocean inspires. Of a like kind appeared the slumber of Plexaura couched in the bed of the forest. Arrested on the brink of abrupt declivities, Telesto leaned over holding her arms stretched out toward the valleys, like unto Ceres, on the summit of Etna, when that goddess advancing to the crater's mouth lit her pinewood torch in the flames of the volcano.

As for me who as yet had no experience of the god, I ran disorderly about the countryside, in my flight carrying with me a serpent, which to the hand seemed not to be there, but which nevertheless I felt passing over my entire body. Similar to a sun ray wound in coils about a mortal by the power of the gods, its knots laced me with a subtle warmth which irritated my forces and pricked me forward like a goad. On I went accusing Bacchus and dreaming on waves of the sea, toward which I believed myself to be compelled with difficulty, but erelong the god had exhausted my strength. Toppling to fall, I implored the earth who giveth rest, when the serpent redoubling its knots, fixed upon my breast with a prolonged bite. It was not pain that entered my riven side; it was calm and a sort of languor,

as though that serpent had beforehand drenched his sting in the cup of Cybele. A light arose as tranquilly within my spirit as over some altar, erected in the wild to mountain divinities, the flames it nourishes will hover during the night. Attentive and peaceful as a nymph of Nysa treasuring the infant Bacchus in her arms I sojourned in caverns until the hour when, a cry from Aëllo giving signal that the mysteries had arrived, I rose up in the steps of that bacchant who walked before us like the night, when with head turned back to call on the shades, she takes her way towards the west. . . .

The End

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